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ABSTRACT

This document consists of two manuals prepared for staff members and guidance counselors in the Learning Community (LC) program, as practiced in New Jersey's North Hunterdon Regional High School District. The staff members are described as teachers performing in multiple roles. Teachers help establish LCs around educational interests and are responsible for planning, scheduling, and, in some cases, budgeting their LCs. Teachers act as accessible advisors to students, are encouraged to maintain telephone contact with parents, and coordinate LC activities with the ongoing multi-elective program of the school. This manual also contains comments on record-keeping and learning options, as well as appendices illustrating useful forms. The manual for guidance counselors suggests useful inservice programs to create and maintain counselor knowledge of the program. Counselors in turn orient students, parents, and the community to the program and inform teachers of the counselors' services. The counselor's role is expanded to contact with all levels of the school operation, while some of the counselor's functions requiring less professional training are turned over to teacher-advisors. The need for openness, flexibility, continued learning, and consciousness of the individual counselor's place within the educational complex as a whole is stressed. (Author/PGD)

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Multi-Unit High School

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Fred G. Burke
Commissioner

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MULTI-UNIT HIGH SCHOOL

LEARNING COMMUNITY STAFF MANUAL

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PREFACE

The Multi-Unit High School (MUHS) combines an instructional strategy, organizational structure, and staff development process into a total model that helps schools meet student perceived needs, assessed needs, career requirements, and human development needs. Successful implementation of the model can produce a school environment which is more open, trusting , cohesive, and positive to staff and students alike via Learning Communities (LC's) and a multi-selective structure.

The MUHS model can be compared to a theatre: the organizational structure provides "the set;" the instructional techniques provide the "script" and "props;" the students, supportive staff, teachers, and administrators are the "players;" and the community provides the financial backing and guidance through the superintendent — the "producer." The project director serves as the "director" of the production. Similar to a successful play, the Multi-Unit High School depends on the interaction of the audience, actors, director, and the community.

The nine essential players: Project Director, Superintendent, Principal, Assistant Principals, Learning Community Leaders, Department Chairpersons, Guidance Counselors, Learning Community Staff, and Staff Development Specialist each have produced a manual which details the role they play in a successful production. All manuals are interrelated, and it is essential that they be reviewed by all concerned to insure the success of the production or the model.

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INTRODUCTION

There are two important considerations in the formation of a learning community. First, it must be compatible with existing curricula. Second, if there is a void in the existing curricula, a learning community can work to remedy the situation. These are the considerations of all the parties involved. It is also important to note that the teachers who will work on the learning community are volunteers. This manual is written by learning community staff members and is intended as a guide to prospective learning community staff members. It contains information to encourage staff participation and enhance the understanding of the community concept, suggest ideas for teachers to use in cognitive and affective areas of learning, present guidelines for scheduling, budgeting, and planning various activities to include parents, students, and staff in the community growth.

FORMATION OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

A learning community can be formed only with a great deal of planning, and planning takes time. The idea for a community may come from a number of sources: students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community. Sometimes the interest stems from a desire for concentration in a specific area; guidance may wish to encourage a career interest community, or teachers may perceive a need or interest in a particular group of students. Where the idea begins is not as important as its ultimate reception and strengthening of the cognitive and affective growth of a group of students. This is the point where the planning begins; interested parties meet to discuss their ideas and brainstorm to develop specific goals for the proposed community.

Brainstorming sessions can include interested teachers, the principal, parents, and students who have expressed an interest in the possible community. The sharing of ideas, understanding of the needs, and selecting information from various sources stimulates the parties as they work toward a concensus in reference to the proposed nature of the learning community. Participation in the brainstorming sessions of one community in its initial phase may stimulate a participant to branch off and pursue other avenues in developing future communities.

Once the subjects and goals of a particular community have been decided, the next step is establishing the staff, guidance counselor, and student body. Faculty members can be informed of the potential learning community by a note from the principal, by students, or other teachers. Students can be informed by announcements, meetings, the school paper, guidance, or other students. The key idea is that all members who attend the meetings and later join the community do so voluntarily because they want to have a part in the community's design.

Slowly, the staff of the community evolves. The staff members then meet with their respective department chairpersons and approval is received for the proposed subject content of the learning community. The **Chairperson's Manual** describes the relationship between the learning community and the subject area. Next, with the aid of the guidance counselor and recruitment sessions, a general idea of the number of students interested can be estimated. Thirty to one-hundred students with an interest in the proposed learning community goals and courses are recruited. The staff may wish to select their learning community leader to act as a spokesman during the meetings with the students who have enrolled in the community. Meetings are then arranged with the parents to inform them of the learning community. Through these meetings teachers find that they achieve strong parental support. Another outcome of the meeting is that parents and students discuss and contribute to the learning community's goals and courses. A sense of ownership develops.

ROLE OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY TEACHER

The success of the learning community strongly depends on the willingness of the staff to participate in all phases of the community's growth. The learning community is not simply a

structural rearrangement in staffing. Rather, it demands a personal commitment by individual teachers to individual students as people engaged in a common experience, concerned with academic progress, while integrating personal interaction and value growth within a traditional system.

To understand the role of the teacher-staff member of a learning community is to understand the role of the teacher. The staff member is a qualified teacher. Workshops in brainstorming, consensus making, and leadership training prepare the teachers. An understanding of the need to adapt and be flexible within the learning community according to the needs of the individual students develops. This is not simply a willingness of temperament or

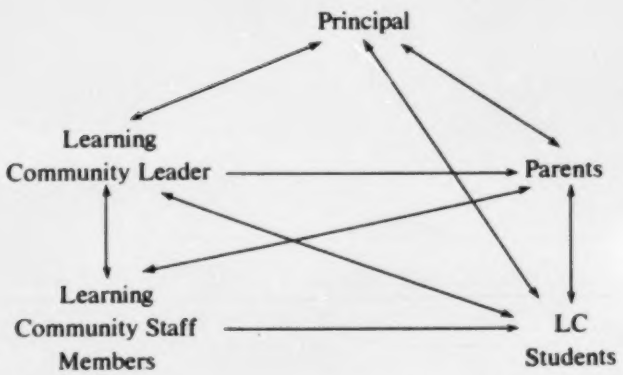
personality, but a self-discipline that maintains academic integrity while remaining flexible enough to include a commitment to students on levels beyond the typical classroom realm; such as allowing the students to hold learning community meetings during class time.

Since the teachers of a learning community work with the same group of students, it is imperative that they have a block of time together to plan interdisciplinary approaches. Many other responsibilities and duties overlap with the traditional role of the teacher, but in the learning community there remains a focus on a specific common group of students with a group of teachers working together to meet the needs of the students and themselves.

One can see the importance of the flow of information through various lines of communication. Through the learning community, students may go either directly to the principal with questions or requests or to the learning community leader who meets regularly with the principal as well as the LC teachers. Personal relationships that grow within the community make it easier for the student to speak up, individually and in the group; voice his interests, concerns, and requests to others.

FIGURE 1

LC COMMUNICATIONS FLOW



ROLE OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

One of the most important relationships exists among members of the learning community staff and the guidance counselor.

The guidance counselor is a key resource person to the LC, keeping files vital to the success of the learning community. Examples would include health records (diabetes, epilepsy, etc.), learning disability referrals, confidential files, copies of report cards, learning community master schedules, individual schedules, schedule changes, standardized test results, academic and activities histories, and all vital personal information. By attending the learning community conferences, the counselor and teachers share their knowledge of the student. The guidance counselor can give important background information to the teachers as they prepare or adjust student schedules. The counselor is also the key person in arranging parent and student

conferences with learning community teachers as well as elective teachers. The learning community also affords the guidance counselor an opportunity to meet with groups of counselees during time alloted to the community. Dissemination of information is facilitated and need not be repeated in individual conferences unless questions arise. These sessions also allow students to hear questions voiced that might not occur to them in an individual conference. The counselor has the opportunity to see individual students interact in group discussions, which can focus on some of the following topics: schedules and changes, credits, grades, careers, college and technical school training, progress reports, and failures. This constant teacher-counselor-student interaction can contribute to the student's growth both academically and personally.

THE LC IN OPERATION

Use of Learning Community Planning Time

As the philosophy of a LC involves a degree of independence from the main body of the school, adequate planning time is essential to its proper and effective functioning. Many responsibilities normally ascribed to other staff members are shouldered by the learning community. This time is needed in the summer to develop plans for the learning community; time in September to implement the plans; and time throughout the year to maintain them if the community is to be successful.

Summer Planning

Summer planning serves to prepare the learning community for the coming year. Ideally, all LC members are present and paid to work together for about 15-20 hours. The LC works according to objectives established by themselves, the learning community leader, and/or the administration. Planning time also serves to establish rapport among the staff, another essential ingredient for a successful learning community.

If the teachers have just completed a year working together as the staff of a learning community, the summer session begins with a review of that year. Strong points are evaluated as to what caused the strengths and how they can be maintained; weak points are discussed and ways established to correct them. An aid in this task would be a questionnaire answered by their former learning community students at the end of the academic year. If the staff has **not** worked together, the summer planning session begins a little differently. Learning community philosophy should be discussed and specific goals established. This serves to open communication lines and bring unity to the staff.

In either case, the next step is to organize the work. A priority list should be established. In general, those tasks essential to the daily functioning of a team should be finished first. Sample tasks are listed and described below:

1. The most essential task is the scheduling of teachers and students. The mechanics of this process, called "block scheduling," will be discussed in detail on page 9. Using this process, the staff members produce a master schedule, individual student and teacher schedules, and a method of communicating and recording these schedules.

2. A second important task is recordkeeping. If the LC wishes to keep records of its students, the process and forms should be organized in the summer. Exactly what information is wanted and an efficient method of collecting and recording it should be developed. (This will be discussed on page 10.)

3. Another important element for LC success is an effective parental contact system. The process needs to be planned during the summer so as to be implemented in the fall. If forms are necessary, these should be designed and duplicated in the summer so as to save precious time during the school year. (Page 17)

4. The advisor-advisee system LC counseling system, discussed on page 12, needs to be established. The LC must decide how structured a system will be needed and develop a means of implementation. If forms are required, they can be drawn up at this time.

After these tasks are completed, there are still many things to do. The amount of time and emphasis to be placed on them will depend on the type of learning community and the amount of experience the teachers have had working together. For example:

1. Staff members on a freshman learning community in a four year high school need to spend time planning orientation activities that will introduce the student to the policies and activities of the school as well as to the physical plant itself.

2. A subject-oriented team may need to develop special curriculums to meet their students' needs. Inter-disciplinary units could also be developed at this time.

The summer is also an ideal time to plan with the guidance counselor, and discuss the role

he/she is to play during the school year. Any concerns about the special needs of individual students could be discussed. The guidance counselor can also be involved in the extra-curricular planning.

5. Extra-curricular planning involves developing activities not necessarily related to the curriculum. Examples of such activities would be mini-courses as described on page 20, field trips and team committees.

6. If it has not been done already, the summer may be the time to order books and materials for the coming year. An inventory of materials on hand can be developed as a point from which to start. The list of things that can be done in the summer is endless. LC teachers will find many other tasks that need to be accomplished that have not been listed here. The point to remember is that all serve to prepare the LC for the school year. (An example of a team's summer work is included as Appendix A)

September Planning

September, or the first weeks of school, is when the summer planning work of the staff is first implemented. Students must be oriented to the team and/or to the school itself; schedules must be distributed, and team rules set down. Students new to the system must be hand-scheduled, while the schedules of students already on the team may need adjustment. Needs-assessment tests are given at this time. The results of these and/or an influx of new students may necessitate changes in the master schedule. Special service teams or the guidance counselor may wish to meet with some or all of the learning community students; the learning community staff may want to pursue human-development activities to help develop a community spirit. If these activities are to be handled successfully and efficiently, they must be planned and coordinated during on-going planning sessions in September.

Continuous Yearly Planning

Throughout the year, staff meetings remain necessary to maintain the learning community program. These meetings should involve all learning community staff members, including the guidance counselor. Ideally, the meetings occur during the school day at a time when all members are free. This free time should be part of each teacher's schedule and not infringed upon by duties or classes. It should be at least 40 minutes long and occur at least once a week. The learning community leader establishes how often meetings will be held and is responsible for announcing them. These meetings serve to accomplish a myriad of tasks, as well as maintain a unity and rapport among team teachers. These tasks are on-going throughout the year, and by no means are they all tackled at each meeting. The following is a list of tasks that can be addressed during LC planning meetings:

1. To update records
2. To give input into the learning community's monthly report by the learning community leader
3. To receive the LCL's report of the meetings he/she has attended
4. To reschedule individual students
5. To change the master schedule and reschedule the entire learning community
6. To complete failure notices
7. To complete progress reports
8. To contact parents by telephone
9. To plan parents' meetings
10. To meet with individual parents
11. To report and discuss discipline problems
12. To meet with a student advisory council
13. To plan mini-courses
14. To plan field trips
15. To plan inter-disciplinary units
16. To give input into the learning community budget
17. To plan day-to-day activities
18. To meet with Child Study Teams
19. To work to resolve any problems that might arise.

Learning Community Budget

While having a separate budget for each team may not be a necessity, it is advantageous in maintaining the autonomy of the learning community. The **Learning Community Leader's Manual** discusses budgeting in greater detail. If individual budgets are possible, it must be determined administratively just what accounts the learning communities may use. Those suggested here would be textbooks, supplies, A/V supplies, field trips, and staff travel. Once this is done, the team staff members each provide input into a proposed budget. This should be done in conjunction with budgets being constructed by the department chairpersons. Only with such cooperation can duplications and/or voids in the budgets be eliminated. The administration may issue guidelines as to what should be ordered by whom, or this may be decided with each department head. In general, those items needed for reasons specific to a learning community

would be ordered by that learning community, while those needed for a specific course would be ordered by the subject area. Once the budget is approved, the staff members should be involved in the spending of the monies.

Block Scheduling

Block scheduling is the process by which a learning community is given a block of time, rooms, students, and teachers, and the autonomy to create an internal schedule suitable to their needs. The administration agrees to the amount of time by considering the number of students and sections of the learning community. One room is set aside for each teacher; the rooms may be clustered together or set apart depending on the teachers' preferences.

Once a block of time has been established, the LCL and staff have the freedom to decide on how to use it. Staff members have input as to how long and how often they wish to meet each section. They may choose to follow the school's bell schedule or create their own. The learning community must realize that they are responsible for each LC student during the entire block of team time. Rather than scheduling free time, the learning community can schedule the student into the library or resource centers. If the block of time covers the lunch periods, lunch must also be scheduled for each student. Once these and other considerations unique to the learning community are decided the initial master schedule is constructed. Methods of doing this are as diverse as communities themselves, and it may be necessary to seek someone who has had scheduling experience, perhaps the guidance counselor.

Block scheduling is one of the big pluses of learning communities because it offers many advantages, listed below. It is evident that the underlying key word in all of them is "flexibility." Potential advantages include:

1. A teacher can alter the time pattern of his course from the established pattern in the elective system.

2. The bell schedule need not be followed. This works best if the team rooms are clustered.

3. Individual days may be altered or rescheduled to facilitate large group activities such as films, meetings, tests, or guest speakers without disrupting the rest of the school.

4. Students' free time can be controlled.

5. A complete change of the internal schedule is possible without additional administrative approval. It might be necessary to regroup students because of assessment results or simply to add variety to the daily routine.

6. The learning community rooms are not used for other classes during the learning community's time block, facilitating last minute changes without bothering non-LC teachers or classes.

The advantages block scheduling offers can be limited to various degrees by any of the following factors:

1. If the number of students is small, the flexibility of block scheduling is severely handicapped. The team is still given a block of time to work with, but if the team teacher only has one class during team time, he may also be scheduled for non-team classes during team time. This cuts down the availability of that teacher during team time and also reduces the scheduling possibilities of that team.

2. The scheduling of some courses — foreign languages or physical education may not be in the domain of the learning community.

3. Too many levels or courses in one subject area limits flexibility.

4. If the rooms are not clustered, flexibility is hampered; and creating an independent bell schedule may not be compatible with the school policies.

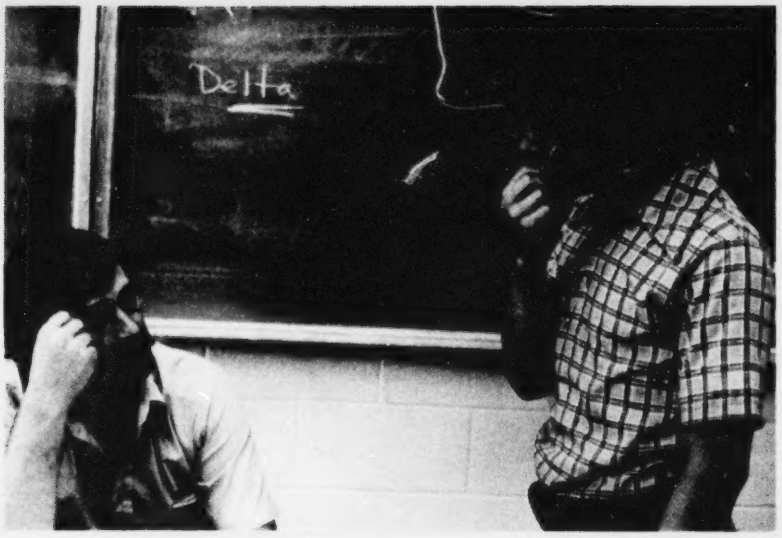
NECESSARY RECORD KEEPING

Doing paperwork and keeping records is a part of every teacher's job and the learning community is no exception. Many of the records kept by the LC are ones that any teacher would normally keep. It is up to each learning community staff to decide what records should be kept; where they will be kept; and who will keep and maintain them. The person keeping the records and papers could be anyone on the learning community staff; the guidance counselor, the learning community leader, or anyone of the learning community teachers; or the records may be divided among them with each keeping a few. All records should be confidential but kept in a place easily accessible to all LC teachers. The advisor-advisee program and good parental contact is made more useful, helpful, and enhanced by good record keeping.

A list of some of the necessary records and paperwork which a LC staff might find useful are as follows:

1. Basic background of students:
   a. Names of all learning community students
   b. Names of parents and guardians
   c. Addresses of all students
   d. Telephone numbers of all students and parents

2. Grades:
   a. All previous grades which the student has received
   b. A list of current marking period grades as they are given by the learning community teachers
3. Any standardized test scores (example: ITED, SRA, reading tests, etc.)
4. Attendance:
   a. Days absent if excessive
   b. Records of class cuts
5. An updated list of the learning community sections or groups
6. Copies of all student schedules and LC master schedules
7. All disciplinary office referrals
8. Conference records:
   a. With student:
      1. Advisor-advisee
      2. Progress reports or warning notices, and failures
      3. Disciplinary referrals
   b. With parents;
      1. Telephone
      2. Parental conferences
      3. Other contacts: letters, etc.
9. Copies of the monthly learning community reports to the principal
10. Special health problems or any special services classifications of any student



11. Questionnaires completed by students
12. Minutes of the faculty-student advisory council
13. Program of Studies of all learning communities and Program of Studies of elective courses
14. List of mini-courses
15. Activities histories of students
16. Any other items wanted or required by the learning community or school

RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Existing within the learning community are four significant relationships which must be developed if the learning community is to reach its fullest potential. These four relationships are the advisor-advisee relationship, the teacher-parent relationship, the learning community staff/non-learning community staff relationship, and the internal LC staff relationships which were discussed in the opening sections of the manual.

Advisor-Advisee Relationships

The role of the teacher-advisor is a crucial part of the learning community for the following reasons:

1. The advisor role enables teachers to be more responsive to student needs and development.
2. Being an advisor makes your subject-area teaching easier and more enjoyable.
3. The student accepts responsibility for decisions about his own learning when he has the help of his own advisor. The teacher may become the first person to help in disciplinary

matters if the need arises since he/she knows the student best.

4. The teacher-advisor system ensures that at least one adult in the school, besides the counselor, knows each student shares accountability with him for his learning program; and helps, assists, and advises the student with scheduling for future years as well as current needs.

5. The teacher, in the role of advisor, helps students build interpersonal skills which facilitate the socialization process.

6. The teacher, acting as an advisor, helps students to build confidence and a positive self-image. He also assists the student in personal problem-solving.

7. The teacher-advisor can provide poorer students with remedial assistance, while encouraging the average or advanced students to progress even more.

In the advisor-advisee relationship the teacher-advisor has three distinct advisory functions: a. program planning, b. reporting progress, and c. human development.

The learning community teachers become advisors to all the students on the learning community. The number of advisees will depend upon the total number of teachers and the total number of students. Example: 4 teachers and 100 students — 25 advisees per teacher. They may be divided in numerous ways depending upon the learning community's preference. Some samples are as follows:

1. A certain number of advisees may be assigned to a teacher.

2. Students may select the teacher they feel most comfortable with. This method may cause an imbalance in the number of advisees.

3. All teachers may be advisors to all students, and when a student feels a need to seek someone out he may go to anyone.

4. Students may select teachers they feel most comfortable with in descending order of preference with the number of students per teacher limited by the LC. (See Appendix B.)

In all cases when working with advisees, the teacher-advisor seeks to build the self-esteem of his students. Examples of how this is accomplished include:

1. Being a positive model

2. Helping the students become honestly conviced of their own worth

3. Being generous with praise, both verbal and non-verbal, whenever a student does something admirable

4. Pointing out strengths as they emerge in the advisee

5. Helping to create situations in which the advisees can **do** well and **know** they did well

Meetings and contacts with advisees can be both formal and informal; they can be in large groups, small groups, pairs, or individuals. They can be in a classroom, private office, cafeteria, or anywhere and at any time either the teacher or student wishes. These conferences can be initiated by either the teacher or student. The teacher may call a student in to discuss a particular problem, or the student may seek the teacher out to discuss a problem. Another

teacher may request to either the student or teacher-advisor that a particular problem be discussed in advisor-advisee time. It is a good idea for the teacher-advisor to keep a record of formal meetings with advisees. (See Appendix C.)

When talking with an advisee give the student the opportunity to identify his own strong points. Your relationship with your advisees should not be totally random. Some of your objectives as an advisor should be to:

1. Get well acquainted
2. Develop mutual trust and openness
3. Help the student to explore his/her own personal value system
4. Help the student learn how to define his/her short and long range goals

One of the most important points to remember in being a successful advisor to students is **accessibility.** A teacher-advisor must be available! Set aside a certain place and period of time as Advisor Time; tell the students when and where; be there and stay there the entire time. Possibly no student will come at first, but if one does and the advisor is not there, he may have lost someone forever. If a student does come, the advisor is there to help. Just the feeling of knowing that someone is available if needed is a great help to some students. A second important point for the advisor to remember is **Show You Care.** The advisor shows the degree that he cares about students by being available, concerned, offering words of encouragement and praise, and showing a sincere desire to listen. Advisor Time needs to be built directly into the learning community schedule. All teachers and students, if possible, should have a small amount of common unscheduled time for advisor-advisee conferences. The teacher-advisor should also meet with the guidance counselor, parents, learning community teachers, and other elective teachers his students have in order to learn as much as he/she can about his/her advisees.

A further extension of the advisor-advisee relationship can be a faculty-student advisory council. The council should be composed of all learning community teachers, the counselor, and a certain number of students from each section or group on the learning community. Student

representatives may be either elected by fellow students or appointed by the teachers or a combination of both. The function and purpose of the council is to provide a means for students to feel comfortable in airing any feelings, concerns, problems, regarding academic, personal, or learning community matters, and make suggestions for ways to improve the learning community, plan activities and curriculum, or mini-courses they would like to have. (See Appendix D.)

Some guidelines in making student selection are helpful. The student should:

1. Demonstrate a sincere concern for helping to improve the learning community concept in all areas
2. Determine and reflect student opinion in the section regarding specific areas of the learning community concept
3. Act as a true spokesman of the section by encouraging students to communicate their ideas and concerns directly.
4. Report results of the meetings to students in the section on a regular basis

In summary, the following list of do's and don'ts may help in planning the advisor-advisee program. They are addressed directly to the potential teacher-advisor.

DO

1. Be avilable
2. Assume good behavior
3. Be frank with students about your own limitations
4. Give them reasons to trust you
5. Listen to your own voice
6. Take time to listen to your students
7. Learn to "decode" what students say
8. Respect your students' right to privacy
9. Show your own commitment to a sense of community

10. Share your own personal hopes, worries, and experiences
11. Have a program
12. Avoid using the teacher's desk as a traditional barrier
13. Care

DON'T

1. DON'T — Say "I'm honest and sincere!" Show It!
2. DON'T — Do things for students that they can do for themselves
3. DON'T — Tolerate negative gossip
4. DON'T — Demand a student to use your advice
5. DON'T — Always respond to a student's problem by giving advice or by telling him how you handled a similar problem "when you were" his/her age
6. DON'T — Go off to the teacher's room during your advisor time

Teacher/Parent Relationships

Developing and maintaining close contact with parents is a very important must. The parent is a vital part and extension of the learning community.

In preparation for incoming ninth grade students, the ninth grade learning communities present programs to the eighth grade students, their parents, and their teachers. The programs, in both daytime and evening versions, introduce and explain the learning community concept and the ninth grade program. During this selection period, the ninth grade learning community teachers and guidance counselors visit the elementary schools and spend a day visiting the eighth graders to help answer any final questions and to observe the students and eighth grade programs. After these presentations and discussions with parents and eighth grade teachers, the students select their learning communities. On the ninth grade level student participation in learning communities is required in the North Hunterdon Regional High School District. This is to facilitate the students' transition from elementary school life to high school life. A parent's approving signature is needed on the student's schedule request form to help insure that parents are aware of the student's choice.

Upperclass learning communities are electives but parents are still involved, as a parent's signature is still needed on a student's schedule request form.

Once a learning community has been selected by a student at the end of the school year (May-June), the learning community staff meets with the parents and students. Learning community teachers and the counselor are introduced and the program further explained. If there are problems and questions, parents will know which teachers and counselor their child has, and who to go to for immediate results.

At the beginning of the new school year (September-October) a Parents' Night is held, to become better acquainted with parents; allow them to express concerns, and have their questions answered. Parents' Nights or Back-to-School Nights may be held at any time during the school year, and as often as a learning community wishes. (See sample letters and parental questionnaire, Appendix E. and F.)

At the mid-point of each marking period or quarter, a progress report is sent home for every student on the learning community. These inform parents of their child's present standing and progress in each learning community class. (See Appendix G.) Parents are also kept informed of learning community activities, such as field trips, programs, or picnics. They are at times asked to take part in or be chaperones at these activities if possible. Some learning communities form parent-teacher councils which are similar to the teacher-student advisory council to help plan activities or make suggestions about improving all aspects of the learning community. Besides the progress reports, the closest contact with parents is maintained through the use of letters, the telephone, and individual conferences.

The telephone call is the quickest way to contact a parent, and the results are usually immediate since the parent can talk to the student that same day. A telephone call to a parent is not, and should not, always be for a negative reason such as cutting class or for a discipline problem: a "well-done" by a student should and is acknowledged by such phone calls. The telephone is a vital link with parents and should be used. Most parents appreciate being told what is occurring at school. They will speak to their children about any problems they may be causing, if they are, and try to correct them as soon as possible. Parents also enjoy sharing

positive reports, and appreciate the staff's willingness to share these experiences. The first few telephone calls are the hardest. Once this natural trepidation can be overcome, a vital link among the school, learning community, and home has been established.

The individual parental conference can either be initiated by (a) teacher, (b) parent, (c) counselor, (d) student. It can include (a) one teacher, (b) all and only learning community teachers, all teachers, both learning community and non-learning community. Such conferences can be with or without the student and with or without the guidance counselor. Parental contact is very important and all efforts should be made to keep the channels of communication open among the learning community, teachers, parents, students, and the school.

Relations with Other Staff Members

The learning community and its staff are not an isolated entity within the school. Rather, it is a part of the total school and should function as such. It is important to maintain close contacts and good working relations with all other staff members, both in one's own subject area and the other subject areas within the school.

Teachers of elective courses can contribute greatly to the success of the learning community, and the learning community can offer similar help to elective teachers. Elective teachers can come into the learning community to visit, supplement, and enrich the curricula of the learning community with lectures, demonstrations, presentations, and mini-courses. This can also work in the other direction, with the learning community presenting programs for non-learning community students and teachers. Teachers of elective courses also come into the learning community classes to recruit students for elective courses in such areas as foreign languages and business. It is interesting to note that LC teachers may also teach elective courses to meet their contractual obligations.

The learning community has accessibility to the multi-elective program and all it offers. A student may voluntarily go or be sent out from the learning community to any teacher for remedial help, enrichment, advanced work, or extra credit courses. The channels of communication should always be open among teachers.

AFFECTIVE PROCEDURES

For assessment in the affective domain the Stern High School Characteristic Index is a useful instrument. This inventory, used in conjunction with parental comments, advisor observations, student requests, and elective staff input will provide the learning community with the direction necessary for the planning of human development and community building activities. Such activities might include various field trips, picnics, dances, service projects, inter-learning community sports competitions, tutoring projects, dramatic presentation, learning community newsletters, etc. The variety and scope of these human development activities is limitless. It is in the planning and facilitating of these activities that teachers, parents, and students can work together in building a very real sense of community.

If any student is unable to function in a learning community he should be allowed to enter the elective program or be placed in independent study.

COGNITIVE PROCEDURES

Cognitive assessment can utilize information gained informally from parents and other staff members; however, there are more formal assessment instruments which also should be used. One such instrument is a questionnaire which is completed by each parent and student along with the various sending district teachers. (Appendix H.) The learning community staff should also examine the student's personal records to assess academic needs which may be reflected by the numerous standardized tests most students have taken.

Although the learning community will normally have a rather complete cognitive profile on most of its students, additional pre and post testing should be done in the various academic disciplines throughout the school year. It should be apparent that assessment is of utmost importance if any educational program is to be effectively evaluated and improved. This

assessment by the learning community is a continuous process. As new needs arise, the learning community must be ready to respond immediately to meet these needs. Thus, the learning community becomes an extremely flexible instrument which can react and adapt in a spontaneous manner to the daily changes in student needs.

LEARNING OPTIONS

As the various assessments are made, the learning community must react by providing learning options which will meet the needs of the individual learning community student. One option open to the learning community is the rescheduling of a student's time. The learning community may find it appropriate to provide release classroom time for the student to receive assistance in the Title I reading room. The student may be assigned to special counseling from the Child Study Team. In cases where one learning community cannot meet the specific needs of a student, the student may be moved into a completely new learning community.

Along with the individual learning options, there may also be group options available. By careful scheduling, the learning community can provide small and large group counseling and academic instruction. Specific areas and times can be scheduled for films, guest speakers, and specialized mini-courses.

A mini-course is a flexible and varied learning option. It may involve a select group of students within the learning community or the entire team. It may be interdisciplinary in its approach or focus on one specific interest or discipline. The length of a mini-course may vary from one class period to one week or longer depending upon the needs of the students and the time available to the teachers.

The mini-courses function within the learning community in numerous ways. They may provide enrichment in both academic and affective areas. Should the teachers perceive a need, mini-courses can be a source of remedial instruction. Mini-courses are also effective in acquainting students with a variety of career options. Not only are mini-course an instructional

option, they also provide variety from the routine academic schedule by coordinating instruction with entertainment and social interaction. Finally, the mini-courses provide learning communities with an excellent tool for the recruitment of prospective learning community members. (See Appendices I. and J. for mini-course examples.)

Other learning options include a special resource room which is staffed by one or more teachers whose responsibilities are to provide remedial work in all the academic areas. An independent study program which permits students to work independently toward academic credit by completing the performance objectives of various courses can also be available. This independent study program may be coupled to a continuous progress curriculum which will allow students to achieve at their own rate.

One of the most versatile options available to the learning community is the resource center. This center is a designated room which functions as an extension of the classroom, as a mini-library, and as an academic resource room. A typical high school might have the following resource centers: math/science, foreign language, vocational business, social studies, English, home economics. Each resource center is staffed with a full time aide along with teachers from the appropriate academic discipline who are assigned duty in the center. For example, the English resource center will always have an aide plus one or two English teachers on duty to assist any students who use the center. Resource centers, therefore, serve the following purposes for the learning community:

1. Students may be scheduled to the resource center to do independent study.
2. Students may be scheduled to the resource center to obtain remedial help.
3. Students may make up work or take make-up tests.
4. Students may complete individualized learning packets.
5. Students may relax and play a variety of academic games.
6. Students may read or listen to records.
7. Students may watch filmstrips or listen to cassettes.
8. Students may have conferences with their advisors.
9. Students may socialize.
10. Students may use the resource center library to read and do research projects.

CONCLUSION

Staff members involved in the development and implementation of learning communities have found that the eventual success of any learning community is in direct proportion to the amount of time and energy contributed by the teaching staff. While many of the activities and responsibilities of the learning community teacher overlap, integrate, and/or are conducted simultaneously with non-learning community responsibilities, a time differential remains. A successful learning community necessitates a great deal of work on the part of the staff; but it is rewarding work, both professionally and personally, for the end result is reflected in the greater success of students.

APPENDICES

A. REPORT ON SUMMER WORK

B. LEARNING COMMUNITY ADVISOR PROGRAM — ADVISOR SELECTION FORM

C. LEARNING COMMUNITY ADVISOR PROGRAM — MEETING FORM

D. LC STUDENT-FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL

E. LETTER TO PARENTS

F. PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

G. PROGRESS REPORT TO PARENTS

H. FRESHMAN TEAM QUESTIONNAIRE

I. POSSIBLE MINI-COURSES

J. MINI-COURSE EXAMPLE

Appendix A.

REPORT ON SUMMER WORK

MRS. PAUL'S FRESHMAN LEARNING COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

We began our summer planning session by reviewing questionnaires that were filled out by our 1975-76 Learning Community in June (see form #1). This generated a review of the entire year as to its strong points and how to maintain them, and also to our weak points, what caused them, and how to strengthen them in 1976-77. From this was formulated a list of tasks and a general schedule of accomplishing them. Mr. Thompson was invited and able to join us in two sessions.

SCHEDULING

As a learning community cannot function without a schedule, the task of developing a master schedule and scheduling each student was done first. Care was taken to keep sections as close in number as possible especially in Physical Education. Attached, find master schedule, list of students' schedules, and class lists.

An efficient method of relating these schedules to the students was necessary as no significant group of students had the same schedule. It was decided the best way was to give each student a blank schedule sheet as well as a copy of the list of students' schedules. They can find their name on the list and fill in their schedule from the information given. (See examples of student schedule.)

ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT DATA

This is one of the areas we felt could be improved in 1976-77. Data such as the students' name, address, phone number, schedule, grades, cuts we felt were important information for all of us to have at our fingertips as resources for student counseling and parental conferences. The key to success in this matter is organizational and this is what we spent time developing. First, each student will have a folder with his/her name on it. We did that. Inside the folder will be a data sheet we developed (see example #2) which the student will fill out. The back of the sheet will serve as a log of any interactions involving the student. The folder will also contain any forms pertaining to the student — individual evaluations, failure notices, discipline reports, etc. We understand the implication of keeping records and will mark the student's permanent records in guidance of their existance and location. They will certainly be open for parents' scrutiny, as that is part of their purpose. At the end of the year they will either be destroyed or will become part of the students' permanent records.

Appendix B.

This is an example of an advisor selection form.

Name:

Section:

Learning Community Advisor Program

The teachers on the Learning Community have agreed on establishing an advisor-advisee program for all LC students. The following are some of the objectives of the program.

1. Students will meet both on a formal and informal basis with their advisor. Meetings will usually be on a one-to-one basis.
2. The meetings will be held to check on your progress on the LC as well as to discuss any other problems you may be having in school and out. (Examples: how to make better use of your time; personality conflicts with teachers or other students, etc.)
3. This program should give both students and teachers a chance to get to know one another better in both academic and non-academic areas.

We hope to be able to give all students either their first or second choice for an advisor. Put a **1** for your first choice and a **2** for your second choice in the space below.

Teacher A____ Teacher C____

Teacher B____ Teacher D____

Appendix C.

Students and teachers complete the following form after a formal advisor-advisee conference.

Name:

Section:

Learning Community Advisor Program

Meeting Form

Date of Meeting:

General discussion of academic progress (includes grades, weaknesses, strengths, specific academic problems, study habits, and any problems with off-LC courses and with LC classes.)

List all your courses and state where you think you are at present and the progress you are making. (Example: Give grade average where you think you are.)

Other items:

Appendix D

The following is really a job description of the LC student-faculty advisory council.

LC Student-Faculty Advisory Council

I. Term: to the end of the first 18 weeks. New elections will then be held.

II. Meeting Day: Every other Day 6

III. Place: Room 236

IV. Periods: Mods 17-18

V. Method of Selection:

A. There will be 3 representatives on the council from each section. Two will be elected by each section and one will be appointed by the LC teachers and counselor.

B. Nomination Process: Write your name or the name of your nominee on a piece of paper and include your section letter or number and give it to any LC teacher by_____. Remember, you can nominate yourself. If you nominate someone other than yourself, please check first with that student to see if he is free then or interested.

C. We will compile a ballot list for each section and hold an election very soon, to determine the representatives.

VI. Requirements and Description of Position:

A. Have gain time mods 17-18 every other Day 6 for council meetings and be regular in attendance.

B. Demonstrate a sincere concern in helping to improve the LC concept in all areas.

C. Determine and reflect student opinion in your section regarding specific areas of the team concept.

D. Report on a regular basis results of the meetings to students in your section.

E. Act as a true spokesman for your section by encouraging students to communicate their ideas and concerns directly to you. This can be done through formal sectional meetings or informal interation.

Appendix E.

This letter is sent to parents and invites them to a parents' night.

Dear Parents:

In response to your many requests, the Learning Community is planning another Parents' Night. This second, informal meeting is scheduled from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. on _____, in rooms _____.

We would like you to indicate which of the following you would specifically like to see so we can arrange an individual meeting.

Teacher A_____
Teacher B_____
Teacher C_____
Teacher D_____
Counselor_____

Please indicate the nature of your concerns on the reverse side of this letter. If you can or cannot attend, please check the appropriate box, sign and return with your child. Please return by_____.

Sincerely,

Learning Community Staff

_____
Parent or Guardian Signature

Will attend.
Will not attend.

Appendix F.

A learning community may find the following parent questionnaire helpful.

Dear Parents:

We are attempting to establish further communications with you and would appreciate it if you would kindly complete the following questionnaire concerning things we might do to aid us in maintaining better communications and rapport between the school and the family.

Feel free to make any additional comments you want.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Learning Community Staff

---

1. Do you feel a parent council should be established for the LC?

   Yes_____ No_____

2. If so, would you be willing to serve on such a council?

   Yes_____ No_____

3. What do you feel such a council should discuss?

4. How frequently do you feel such a council should meet?

5. Would you prefer the meetings at

   (a) 2:45-3:45
   (b) in the evenings

6. Would you like to have another Parents' Night? If so when? Give approximate date.

7. If you feel a council is unnecessary, we could maintain communication with you in the following ways:
   (Circle those you prefer.)

   a. Send home student progress reports in the middle of the marking period.

   b. Call home if we have a number of absences or cuts.

   c. Notify you if a problem occurs.

   d. Notify you when report cards are given.

   e. Notify you of anything you wish, concerning your child. (Please list those things you wish to know.)

8. Have you any further comments, questions, or suggestions? Please list here.

Please return this questionnaire via your child by_____and complete the following:

Name: Address: Telephone No.

Appendix G

Progress reports are sent to parents at least once a marking period.

Dear Parents:

The Learning Community Teachers want to keep you informed as to the progress of your son/daughter. We have reached the halfway point in the present marking period and believe you should know whether greater efforts should be made or whether the overall progress is satisfactory.

Comments	English		Math		Biology		Social Studies	
	*sat	unsat	sat	unsat	sat	unsat	sat	unsat
1. Student's attitude is								
2. Student's attendance is								
3. Student's class behavior is								
4. Student's active participation in class is								
5. Student demonstrates effort to complete work (on time)								
6. Student's performance on tests are								
7. Student is at present:								
Passing with:								
Borderline:								
Failing:								

_____ request a conference to be set up to discuss progress or concerns.

(Teacher — Teachers)

Appointments can be set up by contacting guidance counselor.

Your child has seen this, but please discuss this with him/her.

*sat — satisfactory
unsat — unsatisfactory

Appendix H

This questionnaire helps freshmen teachers in knowing basic information about the students they will be receiving on their teams.

Freshman Team Questionnaire

TO: Eighth Grade Students and Teachers
Please print the following information:

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____
(Town) (State) (Zip)

Parent's/Guardian Name _____

Phone Number _____

Any scores (in percentile) that will aid in placement:

	Standardized Test Test Scores Test Title			Teacher Assessment 5 Grade Levels Gr. Lev.		
		— —	—		++	+
Social Studies						
Science						
Mathematics						
English: Spelling						
Reading (Grade Level)						
Comprehension						

Other (Circle)

Homework assigned:	Always	Usually	Seldom
Homework completed:	Always	Usually	Seldom
Quality of Homework completed:	Good	Fair	Poor
Attendance:	Good	Fair	Poor
Ability to deal w/Gain Time:	Good	Fair	Poor

Appendix I

POSSIBLE MINI-COURSES

The Middle Ages
Crime
Insurance
Money Mangement
Spirit of '76
The National Pastime
Adolescence
Suggested Mini-Courses for the Advanced Science-Math student
Colonial New Jersey
Reading for Details
Careers and College Selection
Land Use Planning
Music for the Non-Music Student
Death
Poetry
Preparation for SAT's
Campaign '76 Meet your Leaders and Understand Their Responsibilities
Model School
Theatre Arts Exposure
Use of Leisure Time
Safety and Compensation
Stock Market
The Olympics
Geography
Space Exploration: Is it worth it?
Ecology
The Law
Capital Punishment

Appendix J

This is an example of a mini-course.

TO: Mr. J. Mammana
FROM: Mrs. L. Gansereit and Ms. N. Ziemba
DATE: June 27, 1975
SUBJECT: Freshman Liberal Arts — Vocational/Business Learning Community — Summer, 1975

Liberal Arts Mini-Course (Revised)

I. Objective: To acquaint the student with contemporary crime situations in three major social areas: the road, home, and the community
   - A. Traffic violations and related vehicular offenses
     1. Class discussion of listed (*) areas
     2. State trooper lecture and demonstration
     3. Local "law enforcement" tour
   - B. Home related crimes
     1. Rap session **volunteers** to discuss personal experiences of home related crimes (*)
     2. Speakers from the 12 rehabilitation institutions in the area for interviews and discussion
     3. Visit by local detective for panel discussion
   - C. Community related crime
     1. Discussions with police
     2. Discussions with victims

II. Objective: To acquaint the student with the individual rights of the victim, the criminal, and the police
   - A. The victim's rights
     1. Visiting police officer as panel member
     2. Visiting lawyer to present Bill of Rights in terms of contemporary interpretation
     3. Visiting zoning board member (if possible, attend a board meeting)
   - B. The criminal's rights
     1. Visiting defense lawyer
     2. Visiting public defender
     3. Volunteers from local institutions, or parolees
   - C. The policeman's rights
     1. His obligation to protect & preserve the rights of his community
     2. Student interviews with local police
     3. Tour of local barracks

III. Objective: To familiarize the student with court procedure
   - A. Understanding jury selection (research local methods)
     1. Petit jury
   - B. A mock trial to experience court roles and procedures
     1. Judge
     2. Prosecutor
     3. Defender

North Hunterdon Regional High School District
Route 31
Annandale, N. J. 08801

MULTI-UNIT HIGH SCHOOL

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S MANUAL

BY

FRITZ HALFACRE
DONNA KASENGA
ROGER SLIKER
WILLIAM THOMPSON

Project Number 72-455, Title III and IVC, E..S.E.A.

September, 1976

1. INTRODUCTION

The guidance area, or counseling and information center as we call it, becomes a key to the success of any Multi-Unit High School. Students, parents, and staff logically come here for information; often, this area is their first contact with the school. It is this area that will have to take the plethora of information that surrounds the school system and make it useful.

Basic area services such as counseling, information giving, clarification of goals, and appraisals are not only continued but the amount of time required for each is in all likelihood going to be increased. The point we make is that the inclusion of a Multi-Unit Project will expand the services of the counseling center and thus expand the services and responsibilities which the counselors provide. We also make the point that counselors **must** be involved in any change process.

2. IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS FOR COUNSELORS

There are several areas that counselors must be in touch with if they are to understand the new Multi-Unit High School System.

It is important that counselors understand and have access to Board of Education policies that have impact on the counseling area. The Board might appoint one of its members as a resource person for the counseling area and arrange some necessary formal orientation programs for the rest of the Board. Since the Board members provide a direct link to the taxpayers, it is vital that counselors understand basic Board policy.

Key members of the administrative staff must be prepared to spend time with the counselors who need to know how these officials plan to implement the Multi-Unit High School

Project at the school. Without adequate opportunity to be open with each other, a two headed monster could be created. This is not to say that there must be philosophical agreement all the time, but it is to say the lines of communication must be open.

Counselors also need to spend much of their initial learning time with the learning community leaders. These are the people who are in the front lines and who should be in a position to provide invaluable information about the many courses offered in their areas. They will be the best sources of course content, community direction and philosophy, as well as general information about plans, hopes, and outcomes.

The counseling area should also create its own store of written materials that can serve to

help counselors expand their understanding of educational trends, research, and new projects. We have found the ERIC system helpful in this respect.

Last, but not least, counselors need to spend a great deal of time in their own in-service meetings. Some sessions can be short business-type affairs, but it is clear to us that many extended meetings are necessary. At the outset these meetings are necessary just to get an understanding of the new system. After a time with the project, however, it is important to have regular business meetings as well as a few of the longer in-depth type.

We have already established that the counseling staff must have a great deal of input before this new system is ever adopted. Once accepted it is equally important that some time be taken for in-service programs among the learning community teachers and their guidance counselor.

3. THE GUIDANCE AREA'S INVOLVEMENT IN ORIENTATION PROGRAMS IN THE MULTI-UNIT HIGH SCHOOL

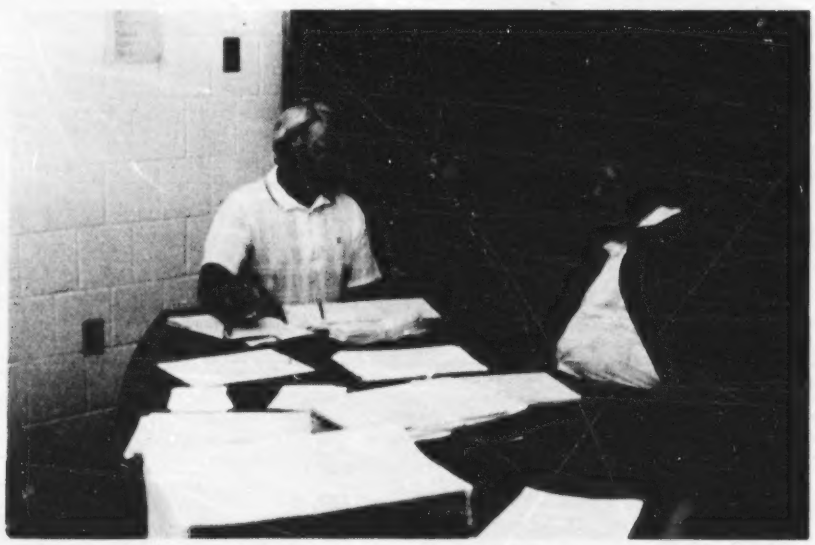
As we have experienced the evolution of the Multi-Unit High School in the North Hunterdon Regional High School District, the need for regular orientation programs seems to

have become more crucial. As counselors we find ourselves more a part of the total functioning of the high school. Our increased involvement spreads into the areas of curriculum; more frequent and more worthwhile consultations with teachers; regular communication with parents and the community; we are integral members of learning communities; and most important of all we have a responsibility to our individual counselees whom we see individually at least four times a year and many of whom we communicate with more often through group guidance sessions.

In order to carry out and to some degree facilitate certain areas of our recognized responsibilities, we have come to utilize varied orientation programs for the faculty, students, and community. Our orientation programs planned for the faculty have taken on various forms. We want the high school staff to know what we as a guidance area are all about — our functions, goals, etc., how we feel about helping students, and how we can help them in dealing with students. We have an annual fall orientation for new teachers to provide them with information which we feel enables them to better understand our services, the necessity for student accountability, and our hope that they use us as resource people. We also use faculty meetings, in-service programs, written forms of communication, small group sessions, and one-on-one conferences to help us communicate with and orient staff members. The methods used depend upon the nature of the information we wish to communicate and the group to which it must be made known. We are also involved in annual curriculum review orientation sessions in which the department chairpersons meet with the counselors to inform us of changes in course content, new course offerings, etc.

Our student orientation programs take place during grade-level class meetings; classroom orientation sessions; small group sessions using academic, social, or vocational interests as methods of forming groups; and also individual orientation programs. We conduct many of these orientation sessions on a regularly scheduled basis with our present students and with our incoming students.

The content of these orientation sessions for students in the Multi-Unit High School varies. Discussions on constructive alternatives in the utilization of free time, job application



and interviewing procedures, college application processes, decision making processes, and the annual task of course selection procedures for the upcoming academic year are only a few areas for orientation.

Because the North Hunterdon Regional High School District is made up of twelve independent elementary school sending districts, our community orientation process seems to be quite a unique and sometimes complex one. The counselors of our district make annual visitations to the individual elementary schools to give presentations on the program and course offerings for incoming freshmen and the make-up of freshmen learning communities. These students, their parents, and teachers are also oriented to the modular schedule and its time patterns, including block scheduling, the concept of gain time, and the options available to our students, and because the high schools are the center of activity for our rural communities we have many activities available. Other orientation programs for our students and the community provide information relating to post-graduate placement and planning be it academic, vocational, or financial.

What we hope to indicate is that as a result of creating new Multi-Unit High School system the guidance and counseling area will have many opportunities for contact with members of the community. Many of these contacts are types of orientation sessions, and counselors must be prepared for these encounters.

4. THE EXPANDED ROLE OF THE COUNSELOR IN THE MULTI-UNIT HIGH SCHOOL.

The very concept of a Multi-Unit High School makes "The Counseling and Information Center" the hub of the school community. Because of this, counselor expertise and competencies must be extensive and diversified, and counselors must get involved at all levels of the educational process.

This new and expanded role makes it imperative that counselors in a Multi-Unit High School be selected not only on their expertise as "counselors" but upon their ability and willingness to deal with all the many facets of the total school operation. Their ability to communicate and interpret what is happening at the school to other people both in and outside the school community is very important.

A. Counselor Assignments

A1. Learning Communities — The very nature of the learning community makes it imperative that all members of a particular learning community be serviced by the same counselor.

A2. Specialty Areas — Half day vocational students, work-study students, etc., are often best serviced by one counselor, thereby facilitating communication and accountability procedures. Servicing of vocational students necessitates a great deal of inter-school

communication, processing of records, dealing with quotas, etc. When one person is responsible, efficiency is improved and the margin for error greatly reduced.

A3 Competency Counseling (Specialization Vs Generalization) Many counselors have special competencies such as crisis intervention, group processes, adjustment counseling, career educational knowledge, etc. As a result of their background, training, interests, and or personality traits they can be used more effectively than before.

Students are not assigned to counselors on the basis of their acute or chronic needs and the counselor's special expertise, but counselors with special or unique capabilities are identified and assigned a particular role in the area. Students identified as needing the special services of their counselors are then referred to them for special help.

Certain counselors are also assigned to become totally knowledgeable about certain key informational areas (testing, college placement, etc.). These people then become valuable resource persons for students, advisors in the "advisor-advisee" role, counselors, parents, and others. In effect they are our built in "experts."

A4. Assignment for More Than One School Year — We strongly believe that each counselor should be in contact with a student for more than one school year. We are convinced that better counseling services will result. The major disadvantage of this "long term" assigning is the possibility that a student or counselor may be unable or unwilling to do what is necessary to establish the necessary rapport, or an incident might damage the counselor-counselee relationship to the extent that the counselor becomes ineffective. This is easily remedied by allowing students to change counselor assignments upon request. We do this whenever necessary.

B. Initial Counselor-Counselee Contact at the Beginning of the School Year

B1. Set the tone that will establish the "Counseling and Information Center" as an "open" place. This is crucial to the successful operation of the area since the full utilization of the area's services cannot be accomplished by operating on the basis of conference appointments. Students must feel free to come into the area when they need services. Secretarial help is critical to the establishment of the proper area atmosphere and their selection should be made with this in mind.

B2. Another important job that must be done during this initial contact period is to resolve any scheduling problems that might have resulted because of computer service problems, conflicts arising from the master schedule, changes in educational plans, etc.

B3. The following are some of the ongoing "clinical" type functions which assure the validity and reliability of records so important to the student after he/she leaves school: review permanent records to make sure all information is valid and reliable;

interpret information in the records for the student; credit requirement check; update activities, etc.

Once the student leaves school only the Permanent Record remains. You must be accountable and require that other people who provide data for the Permanent Record also be held accountable. The student has a right to expect that we will protect the integrity of his record.

C. **Scheduling Conferences** — This is an extremely important process because of the multiplicity of curricular choices available in the Multi-Unit High School.

C1. Pre-planning on the part of the student is imperative and the scheduling process must be an ongoing interaction among the student, teachers, counselors, and parents. Because of the time constraints dictated by computer data input and turn around time, the actual mechanical scheduling process must take place in a relatively short space of time. This gives each student a very limited time with the counselor. Because of the need to interpret so many courses, requirements, and prerequisites, to so many diverse students, group processes must be utilized extensively to fully utilize the time available.

C2. The scheduling process in a Multi-Unit High School must enable each student to choose courses in their best interest. Students must be supported in their efforts to know themselves, and counselors must know their counselees.

C3. Many people have a part in the selection process and counselors must make sure all legitimate parties are fully informed at every step in the decision making process. Counselors must know:

(a) The Program of Studies thoroughly.
(b) Teacher competencies and personalities.
(c) Parental background, expectations for their children, etc.

D. **End of Year Conferences Tie Together the Loose Ends and Establish a Positive Note for the Student to Close the Year.**

D1. **Clarification process** — Make sure the students leave in a good frame of mind with their goals, aspirations, etc. fully clarified.

D2. **Update Permanent Record** — Validate all information to conform with the highest standards of record keeping and the mandates of the Family Rights and Privacy Act.

D3. **Review Both Immediate and Long Range Educational and Career Plans** — Establish a simple means of contact with the school in case the student needs services over the summer.

E. **Some other kinds of contacts — Formal and Informal**

E1. Crisis intervention

E2. Parent conferences

E3. Teacher conferences

E4. Special Services involvement

E5. Academic progress conferences

E6. Adjustment counseling

E7. Career education

E8. Post high school plans

E9. Contact with community and school referral services

E10. Personal counseling — being a good listener

E11. Student advocate

E12. "Counseling" individual and group in the real sense of the word.

E13. Conferences with administrative personnel in matters regarding student rights, concerns, problems, etc.

F. Counselor Involvement in the Curricular Process

F1. **As Contributors** — Provide feedback from students regarding courses offered and/or needed.

F2. **As Innovators** — Many of the early programs leading to the Multi-Unit High School were developed with creative ideas provided by counselors.

F3. **As Change Agents** — Make administration aware of what is happening at the grassroots level — in the trenches. Run workshops to make people feel more secure about change. Change attitudes. Facilitate change — make it work.

5. COUNSELORS' ROLES IN ADVISOR/ADVISEE

When the advisor/advisee role is operating at its full potential, the counselor will continue to serve as a source of information to the teacher advisor, but the teacher advisor will assume the responsibility for providing the necessary, but routine, kinds of information that constantly beset counselors, i.e., "Where do I get my working papers?" "How many credits will I have at the end of the year?" "What is the address of the local Navy Recruiter?" The advisor will also become more involved in the student's academic planning by relating his knowledge of the students' motivation, study, work habits, academic strengths, and weaknesses to the student's aspirations.

The advisor/advisee role will best function when time, space, and resources are provided. The counselor's role will be to provide the advisor with the most valid and reliable information available, to reinforce the advisor whenever possible, and be accessible to the advisor in order to aid the advisor in determining at what point in time the advisor no longer has the competency, expertise, or confidence to deal with the student and desires to refer the student to other professional staff personnel.

6. USE OF THE COUNSELING AND INFORMATION CENTER DURING STUDENT/STAFF UNSCHEDULED TIME

The Multi-Unit High School at North Hunterdon and Voorhees operates on altered time and period structures. Our experience with a modular multi-day system creates more free time for most students and some teachers. In order to take advantage of this situation we have attempted to make the counseling center more open.

The "opening" process includes the establishment of a career/college resource center, computer tie in for college and vocational information, open counseling and greater access by staff to students' permanent records. While none of this is perhaps new, we have felt the need to work hard at creating the idea that we are an open area. This will create some problems for counselors who are used to working from a rather tight appointment type schedule. If your counselors are flexible enough to open up part of their schedule, you should be able to deal with the students and staff, who will walk in without appointments to take advantage of the area's services.

This is also a good place to indicate that our counseling center is made up of all personnel — counselors, secretaries, and aides, and that each of us is part of the whole that affects what the area is. In-service must include all the members of the counseling staff because as the adage states, "We will be as strong as our weakest link."

7. THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ON-GOING IN-SERVICE PROGRAM FOR AREA PERSONNEL

As counselors in a Multi-Unit High School, we feel that an on-going in-service program for area personnel is important and very necessary. We are living in an ever-changing society and like our world, the nature of the guidance counselor's role has also changed greatly over the years. The traditional role of dispensing college information and/or intervening in crisis and disciplinary situations has been expanded to include more social and vocational adjustment counseling. We have increased our consciousness of the affective domain, and as counselors we feel that appropriate in-service programs help us deal more effectively with our tasks as counselors. We have observation sessions where we as an area observe one of the counselors in conference with a student or students and follow this observation by critiquing what we've observed. We also provide times when the counselors get together to discuss area concerns and individual counselor concerns. During conferences we exchange ideas and information related to counseling techniques, workshops, etc. We also make use of community agencies and their personnel and have invited members of agencies into the area as guest speakers.

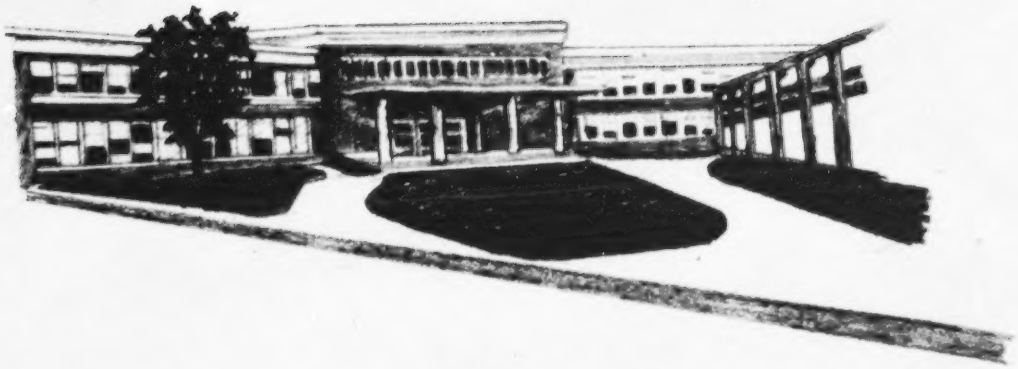
We have also recently become involved in a masters in counseling internship (practicum) arrangement with a local college (Rider) whereby we allow their practicing counselors to intern in our area. Our experience with this program has proved to be one of a mutual learning experience for both the "new" and "old" counselors.

8. COMMUNICATIONS — THE RIPPLE EFFECT

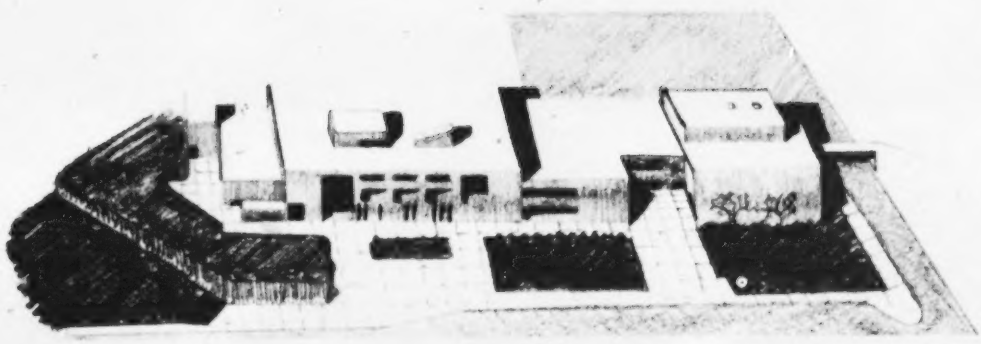
The Multi-Unit High School is going to complicate life for all members of the counseling staff. Busy schedules are going to become even more hectic and all the new courses, time schedules, day patterns, free time, computer services, public relations, and orientation sessions are going to increase chances for error. These changes will also expose the incompetent counselor who up to now, under the more traditional systems, has had a chance to hide.

We have found that as one of us goes, so goes the area. This has been great when our input has been perceived as positive, but not so great when it was negative. The main point here is that not one of us acts alone or can hide from responsibility and accountability. Each of our counselors has a personal philosophy, but in public statements, meetings, and such we each understand, I hope, that when we speak or write what we think, "I" becomes "we." If one of us makes mistakes on a regular basis, this creates a feeling that the counseling area is wrought with mistakes.

As can be seen, the guidance area becomes another key to the success of the Multi-Unit High School. It is the area that takes information and makes it relevant to students. We wish you success.



North Hunterdon



Voorhees